

REMARKS

In the July 15, 2003 Office Action, claims 1-10 and 12-20 stand rejected in view of prior art. Claims 11 and 21 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the July 15, 2003 Office Action, Applicant has amended claims 1, 12, and 15. Applicant has also amended claims 11 and 21 to place them in independent form with all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Thus, claims 1-21 are pending, with claims 1, 11, 12, 15, and 21 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the following comments.

Specification

Applicant has amended the specification to clarify the antecedent basis for the limitations of claims. Applicant believes that the specification complies with 37 CFR §1.71 and 37 CFR §1.75(d)(1).

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

On pages 2-5 of the Office Action, claims 1-10 and 12-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,176,446 to Sato ("Sato patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,164,577 to Koike ("Koike patent"). In response, Applicant has amended claims 1, 12, and 15.

More specifically, claims 1, 12, and 15 have been amended to recite that the water-repelling film layer is provided on the clearance-defining surface of the first component, which rotates relative to the second component, and that the invasion of water into the clearance is prevented due to a centrifugal force from rotation of the first component. This limitation is supported by page 4, lines 24-28 of the specification. Applicant believes that the Sato patent and the Koike patent do not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1, 12, and 15, whether taken singularly or in combination.

The Sato patent has been cited in the Office Action to show in Figure 6 a cover plate (allegedly first component) and a spool shaft (allegedly second component). The Office Action concedes that the Sato patent does not disclose or suggest a water-repelling film layer on the clearance defining surface of the first component.

Regarding the Koike patent, Applicant maintains that it would not occur to an ordinary skill in the art to apply the metal plating of the Koike patent to either the sealing member 34 or the spool shaft 15 of the Sato patent. The Koike patent discloses a film layer 14 that protects the surface of the spool base material 12 from abrasion and corrosion. However, as stated in the background of the invention of the Koike patent, the purpose of the Koike patent is to provide a corrosion or damage-proof and smooth spool surface. In other words, the film layer 14 of the Koike patent is meant to protect *only the surfaces on which the film layer 14 is directly applied*. Clearly, this is not what the water repelling layer of present invention is designed to protect.

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In other words, as clearly stated on page 3, lines 2-5 of the specification, the object of the present invention is to prevent invasion of water into an internal structure, *not* to keep the internal parts resistant from abrasions, corrosion, and inclement weather, as stated in the Office Action. More specifically, the water repelling layer of the present invention is designed to prevent invasion of water into the internal structure, thus protecting the surface of the internal structure, to which the water repelling layer is *not* applied. In other words, the water repelling layer of claims 1, 12, and 15 are applied to the sealing surfaces, not to the surfaces of the internal parts that need to be protected. Thus, in view of the fact that the film layer 14 of the Koike patent is meant to be applied on a surface that the film layer 14 is meant to protect, there is no suggestion or idea to use the film layer 14 as a sealing for protecting surfaces of internal parts. Thus, an ordinarily skill in the art would not arrive at the arrangement of claims 1, 12, and 15 by combining the teachings of the Sato patent and the Koike patent.

Additionally, claims 1, 12, and 15 as currently amended require that the water-repelling film layer be applied on the clearance defining surface of the first component, such that invasion of water is prevented due to a centrifugal force from rotation of the first component. There is no disclosure or suggestion in the Koike patent that invasion of water into the internal structure can be prevented by the centrifugal force from rotation of the rotor. Therefore, Applicant believes that claims 1, 12, and 15 are not rendered obvious by the Sato patent and the Koike patent, whether taken singularly or in combination.

With regard to claims 2-10, 13-14 and 16-20, they depend from claims 1, 12 and 15, and therefore are narrower. Since Applicant believes that claims 1, 12 and 15 as currently amended are not disclosed or suggested by the Sato patent and the Koike patent, Applicant

believes that dependent claims 2-10, 13-14 and 16-20 cannot be disclosed or suggested by the prior art record.

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

On pages 5-6 of the Office Action, claims 11 and 21 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Since there is no rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, it is unclear which rejection the Office Action is referring to. Nonetheless, Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Applicant has amended claims 11 and 21 to place them in independent form with all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims, Applicant believes that claims 11 and 21 are now in condition for allowance.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant has filed herewith three references as Information Disclosure Statement. These references are: European Patent Application Publication 0665274 A2 to Tsujioka ("Tsujioka patent"), U.S. Patent No. 4,863,762 to Aramaki ("Aramaki patent"), and Japanese Patent Application Publication 2000-41543 to Shigefuji ("Shigefuji patent"). Applicant believes that these reference do not anticipate or render obvious the present invention whether taken singularly or in any combination.

The Shigefuji patent discloses a fishing reel in which water-repellency treatment is applied to surfaces of the path through which water invades, such that these surfaces are protected from corrosion. More specifically, water repellency treatment is applied to surfaces of internal components such as bearings for spool, bearings for the handle, and reverse-prevention gears. The water-repellency treatment herein means applying powders of fluoride and/or silicone compounds. The Shigefuji patent also states that the water-repellency treatment can also be applied to a gap between the reel and the rotational frame to prevent invasion of water inside the rotational frame.

Applicant believes, however, that the Shigefuji patent does not disclose or suggest the use of centrifugal force in prevention of water invasion, as required by claims 1, 12, and 15 as now amended. Also, the Shigefuji patent does not disclose or suggest the idea of alleviating the impairment of rotational balance due to sealing members, which is the object of the


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present invention. (*See* Declaration of Mr. Koji Takikura attached hereto.) Thus, Applicant believes that the Shigefuji patent does not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1, 12, and 15, whether taken singularly or in any combination.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-21 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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